

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 04345
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: ELECTORAL SITUATION IN ZARAGOZA

REF: MADRID 4320

1. AS PART OF OUR CAMPAIGN COVERAGE, EMBOFF JUNE 1-2
VISITED THE CITY OF ZARAGOZA, THE INDUSTRIALIZED CAPITAL
OF THE LARGELY RURAL PROVINCE OF THE SAME NAME AND
UNOFFICIALLY THE CAPITAL ALSO OF ARAGON, A REGION MADE UP
IN ADDITION OF THE SMALL PROVINCES OF HUESCA AND TERUEL.
857-589, 35233, 5#3 ?- 173 :97,546 -, \$:-5-)7,6-,
ARAGON FEELS THE PULL OF THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL CENTERS OF
BOTH THOSE AREAS, AND A VISITOR QUICKLY BECOMES AWARE OF
A CERTAIN FEELING OF TRYING TO HOLD OUT AGAINST THAT PULL,
BUT ARAGON DOES NOT DISPLAY, OF COURSE, ANYWHERE NEAR THE
DEGREE OF AUTONOMIST SENTIMENT OF CATALUNYA OR
THE BASQUE COUNTRY.

2. THE VOTE LEVELS OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES IN ZARAGOZA
ARE NOT EXPECTED TO VARY SIGNIFICANTLY FROM NATIONAL NORMS,
ACCORDING TO WHAT EMBOFF WAS TOLD. CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGN
MANAGERS, AS WELL AS THE PUBLISHER OF THE CITY'S PRESTIGIOUS
"HERALDO DE ARAGON", COINCIDED IN PLACING PRINCIPAL
EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL POLITICAL FIGURES AND CONCERNS, AND
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IN CONCLUDING THAT THE VOTERS WOULD DECIDE ON THE BASIS OF
GENERAL PARTY IMAGE, "PERSONALITY" OF NATIONAL POLITICAL
LEADERS (SUAREZ, GONZALEZ, FRAFA) RATHER THAN ON SPECIFIC
PROGRAMS, ISSUES, OR EVEN THE REPUTATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL
LOCAL CANDIDATES. AS ON THE NATIONAL PLANE, A LARGE NUMBER OF
VOTERS IS REPORTED TO BE UNDECIDED. SUCH LOCAL CONCERNS
AS A CONTROVERSIAL PLAN TO PIPE WATER TO BARCELONA APPEARED
TO COUNT FOR LITTLE IN THE ELECTION, PERHAPS MOSTLY BECAUSE

SENTIMENT WITHIN THE PROVINCE IS IN NO WAY DIVIDED IN SUCH MATTERS.

3. ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, PEOPLE VOLUNTEERED CONCERN ABOUT THE US AIR FORCE PRESENCE AT THE NEARBY ZARAGOZA BASE. THEY CITED VAGUE FEARS OF BECOMING A TARGET IN A NUCLEAR EXCHANGE, RATHER THAN ANY FRICTIONS WITH THE LOCAL POPULACE. CURIOUSLY, NO ONE BROUGHT UP THE SUPPOSED DANGER OF HAVING AERIAL TANKERS STATIONED AT ZARAGOZA.

4. ONE UNUSUAL FACTOR EXISTS IN THAT THERE IS AN INDEPENDENT CENTRIST CANDIDACY, HEADED BY THE WELL-REGARDED FORMER PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT, THAT FIGURES TO SIPHON OFF VOTES FROM THE SUAREZ-LED UCD SLATE, ENOUGH FOR A SEAT. THAT COULD LIMIT THE UCD TO 3 OF THE PROVINCE'S 8 3-5 , WITH 2 OF THE REMAINING 4 TO GO TO THE SOCIALIST PSOE, AND ONLY 1 TO THE ALIANZA POPULAR (WHOSE TICKET IS HEADED BY A FORMER MAYOR AND WHOSE ELECTION HEADQUARTERS FEATURE POSTERS OF FRANCO). THE EIGHT WOULD GO EITHER TO THE FDC (RUIZ-GIMENEZ/ GIL ROBLES) SLATE OR TO A REGIONALIST RIVAL, "ARAGONESE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY". ALTERNATIVELY, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT DIVISION COULD GIVE A SEAT TO THE PSP'S (TIERNO GALVAN) LOCAL AFFILIATE OR TO THE PCE.

5. THE ONLY REAL VARIANT ON THESE EXPECTATIONS CAME FROM THE PSOE, WHICH THOUGHT THAT WITH SO MUCH DIVISION AMONG THE PARTIES, IT MIGHT GET AS MANY AS THREE OR EVEN FOUR SEATS. THE LOCAL SOCIALISTS, HOWEVER, APPEAR OVERLY CONFIDENTIAL

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OPTIMISTIC. THE PSOE WOULD HAVE TO OUTSCORE THE UCD TO DO SO, AND EVEN WITH THE SPLITTING EFFECT OF THE INDEPENDENT CENTRIST, THIS APPEARS UNLIKELY.

6. PRESUMABLY CONNECTED WITH THE EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL FIGURES WAS WHAT APPEARED TO BE THE GENERALLY UNIMPRESSIVE CALIBER OF MOST LOCAL CANDIDATES. THE INDEPENDENT CENTRIST GOT GOOD MARKS FOR INTELLIGENCE, ENERGY AND COMPETENCE EVEN FROM THOSE OPPOSED TO HIM POLITICALLY, BUT OTHERWISE THERE WERE NO REAL STANDOUTS. A UCD CAMPAIGN MANAGER, ASKED BY EMBOFF ABOUT HIS LIST'S CANDIDATES, WINCED AND ASKED IN RETURN, "DO I HAVE TO TELL THE TRUTH?" AND INDICATED THAT MUCH POTENTIAL LOCAL TALENT WAS SITTING THIS ROUND OUT. THE "HERALDO" DIRECTOR, WHILE SPEAKING WELL OF THE INDEPENDENT, THE FORMER MAYOR, AND THE HEAD OF THE UCD LIST, SPOKE IN SIMILAR VEIN.

7. QUERIES ABOUT THE SENATE RACE DREW EITHER VAGUE INTIMATIONS OF UCD AND PSOE PREDOMINANCE OR DISMISSALS OF THE SENATE AS UNIMPORTANT. WE CONSIDER THE LATTER IDEA

ERRONEOUS, BUT IT CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE WIDESPREAD IN
ZARAGOZA.
STABLER

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